

Up Country.

By ALICE LOUISE LEE.

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SHE boarded a Broadway car at Fourteenth street, New York, being blown and jerked through the doorway and into the only empty seat space left.

It was an exceedingly narrow space, encroached upon on one side by a big red faced man and on the other by a dark hued son of Hungary.

Joy, being small, occupied the edge of the middle ground and stood her dripping umbrella in front of her. Then she leaned over the load of schoolbooks hugged under one arm and surveyed the hem of her skirt. It was damp.

"Oh, dear," she mourned inwardly, "I can just see it shrink, and it's the one Jim liked best!"

She squeezed herself farther back on the seat with a feeling of guilt. Three

months before she had not had Jim's preferences so clearly in mind, but three months in New York had altered Joy's standpoint.

She choked back the tears—they lay so near the surface now—and opened a book, but her thoughts would wander back to the "up country" which she had left, not content to settle down in the village school—or in a village home either, for that matter—after graduating from a normal college.

"Twenty-third street!" called the conductor.

Joy looked forlornly out into the early wet darkness and gave a sudden exclamation.

A car from the West Twenty-third street ferry had disgorged a crowd of transfers that were making a rush for her car. These the conductor met by the monotonous command, "Let 'em off—let 'em off!"

The crowd paused, held in check by a young man with a general appearance of squareness. His shoulders were square. So were his firm lower jaw and his tanned forehead.

As to his dealings, Joy could testify that they also were square, too square sometimes in that he had taken her at her word and for three dreary months remained silent.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "it's Jim!"

Fortunately neither the large man nor the son of Hungary understood the English language or the language of tones or they would have suspected that a Klondike had suddenly been rolled to the feet of the damp little public school substitute between them.

Impulsively she struggled to her feet under the impression that she was going to meet Jim and as impulsively sat down again, remembering that she could not. Would he see her? She waited breathlessly, with parted lips, when he entered.

In looking for a seat his eyes traveled straight past the now trembling little substitute without seeing her. A big lump rose in her throat. Perhaps he did not wish to see her. Perhaps he had been in the city for weeks and had not looked her up. It was just as well, she reasoned, that he had not, because her landlady had recently rented the parlor, so there would have been no place for him to sit, but—but she wanted to be remembered just the same.

The lump in her throat increased in size, and the lights blurred. "Up country" she had been of too great importance to be overlooked.

The square young man had found a seat on the same side of the car, and nothing of him was visible from Joy's position save the hand bag at his feet. Joy had not noticed this before. It proclaimed the fact that he had just arrived, and she was suddenly enabled to swallow the lump in her throat.

At Thirty-first street an old colored mammy boarded the car and, after one look at the full seats, clung to a strap. There was an instant's pause, and then Joy's eyes glowed softly and Joy's heart beat warmly.

"That's like Jim," she whispered to herself. "That's the way they do up country," for the square young man was clinging to the strap and the colored mammy was seated.

His back was toward Joy now—his straight, square shouldered back. It rested her just to look at it. She had not realized before how tired she was. Being only a substitute, she was the natural prey of every grade in the great school building where her task was the unenviable one of taking the place of absent teachers, one day in this room, one day in that, a stranger to every pupil, who celebrated her ad-



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vent by a display of all the tricks known to the east side youth.

"Forty-second!" called the conductor. Joy arose, trembling. She wondered if she could speak to Jim without crying. She had such a silly desire to cry. Jim solved her problem unexpectedly by reaching over, picking up his hand bag from between his feet and pushing his way out ahead of her, little dreaming for whom he was making a path.

He did not know until he stood on the curb and raised his umbrella. Then he discovered that it sheltered two, and the other was looking up with an adorable expression of timidity in her face and a little timid quaver in the voice which said, "How do you do, Jim?"

"Joy!" cried Jim.

Down went the hand bag hard on the wet pavement, and Joy's damp gloved hand was enveloped in a big dry one and held there tightly while Jim's eyes, thrown off their guard by the unexpectedness of the meeting, said things he had resolved they never should repeat, while he answered her greeting with an emphasis which brought the color to her pale cheeks.

"I'm doing very well—now—thank you."

Then they both laughed, Joy with a little girlish giggle which sounded strange to her own ears. It had been so long since she had laughed out of sheer happiness.

Some one pushing against them brought them back to a realization of time and place. Jim released her hand, asking vaguely, "And is everything well with you, Joy?"

Joy hesitated. Could she answer the question without giving way to the pent up feeling of three months?

"Oh, I"—she began and paused, looking away.

Jim, glancing down at her averted face, suddenly remembered things. There was an abrupt change in his manner. Stooping, he picked up his grip, saying dryly, "A foolish question to ask after hearing some of your letters read."

Then, without looking at her, he asked, "Which car do you take?"

"Cross-town east," she replied in a muffled tone.

As Jim signaled a car he volunteered the information stiffly, "I'm in the city on business."

"Oh!" faintly from Joy, but she smiled.

Within the car there was but scant seating room, and Joy snuggled back behind Jim's shoulder, saying to herself: "Such a foolish boy! Such a dear, foolish boy!"

Aloud she asked quietly, "Jim, what did you mean about my—my letters?"

Jim sat bolt upright, looking through the opposite window. "Your aunt read me some of them that told how you were enjoying yourself down here and how much livelier New York life is than our 'up country' life. I believe you wrote that the people here called it 'up country'?"

"Yes," came in a low tone from behind his shoulder. Joy's pride had dictated those letters.

"And then you wrote about the school—what a magnificent building you were in and how fine it is to be part of a school with fifty teachers instead of an insignificant six."

"Oh!" exclaimed Joy. "Did I say that?" But she knew without asking. She had been so determined that no one up country should suspect her regret.

Jim nodded, staring persistently out of the opposite window, and continued steadily, "Then she read one, the letter about your boarding house and what nice people are there—"

"Oh," interrupted Joy, "did she read you that letter?"

Jim squared his shoulders defiantly. "She did."

Behind his arm Joy was smiling faintly, while into her eyes crept an expression of mischief as she peered around the aggressive shoulder at the face set aggressively toward the window.

"Let's see"—Joy's tone was softly speculative—"what else did I write in regard to the boarders?"

No reply.

"I think it was in that letter I told about the lawyer who sits opposite me

for a blockaded car. Jim stood straight and stiff, holding the umbrella high over their heads, admitting the cold, wet world to their conference.

"Jim!" said Joy softly, glancing up. "Jim!"

His face relaxed at her tone, but his voice was still grim and the umbrella held high. "Well?"

"The schoolhouse is a handsome building on the outside, just as I wrote; but, Jim, the pupils up country are so much nicer. Because I'm only a substitute they act—oh, you never saw such actions!"

Jim's muscles stiffened suggestively. "I'd just like to get at 'em," he muttered.

"And, Jim"—Joy's tone was fainter and her face hidden—"it's true, of course, that life here is livelier than it is up country for some, but not for me. All I do is to go to school in the morning and go back to my hall bedroom at night. Oh, I hate it!" with suppressed vehemence.

The umbrella wavered and dropped lower over their heads. Jim's face was eager, but his voice sounded a jealous note as he prompted, "But there are all the nice people at the boarding house."

Joy shook her head. "It takes so long to make acquaintances here, Jim. I don't really know any of the boarders—that is, any one worth knowing."

Again the umbrella wavered, dropped a little lower, but rose again as Jim hesitated jealously. "That lawyer, Joy?"

Joy smiled and glanced bravely up, although her eyes were moist. But behind the tears gleamed the mischief as she replied:

"I—didn't tell all the truth about the lawyer, Jim. He—he has a wife out west suing for a divorce, and I don't blame her a bit."

The umbrella wavered no longer, but dropped promptly close above their

heads. A car, escaping the blockade in front of the Grand Central station, came groaning around the curve and stopped. All the waiting transfers save two scrambled on board. Those two were not aware of the existence of that car or the one which followed, so successfully did the big umbrella from "up country" shut out the cold, rainy world.

The Persians. The people of Persia are intelligent, adaptable, hospitable and sociable. They have kindly and generous instincts. They are very sensitive to the opinions that their neighbors have of them, particularly in matters intellectual. Their amour propre is seldom for their country, but more often for themselves, their town or their religion. Still, it is a strong feeling. In moral matters it is easier to induce them to exceed their duty than to perform it strictly. They are very commercial in their ideas, but their notion of commerce is rather to effect a coup, and whether in business or in ordinary behavior a transaction where you simply do the right thing without seeking either much advantage or much credit will always strike them as hopelessly banal. They are therefore very unreliable and appear to the western to be lacking in character. They are extraordinarily apt at imitation, and they quickly conform themselves to any change of circumstances. This seems to be partly owing to their lack of depth and to the usual absence of a desire to change anything under the surface, but this lack of depth is only comparative. A Persian is not a fool, and on certain matters that are thrust before his eyes he sees much more deeply than the European.—Contemporary Review.

A Spanish Street Scene. In nothing is the illiterate condition of Spain shown as in the numerous writing booths which line the streets of Barcelona. Spain has preserved much of the picturesque life of past ages, and even at the present day in many of its towns may be seen the watchman, with pike and lantern, going his nightly rounds not far from a fine street brilliantly illuminated by the electric light.

In the Rambla, the principal street of Barcelona, may be seen several of these writing booths of the public scribes. There for a small consideration the illiterate or any one else may have anything indited from the poetry of a love epistle to the prosaic application for a situation. The front of each booth is placarded with the name of the scribe and the services he is prepared to render to his customers. Some scribes combine the art of painting with that of writing, and all add to their activities the business of registry offices for servants.

STARRING OUT OF THE OPPOSITE WINDOW, at table, but perhaps auntie didn't read you that part," demurely.

Only an indistinct affirmation from Jim.

"A very bright man," observed Joy. "So you said in the letter," grimly.

"Rather nice looking."

If Jim had not been so intent on the opposite window he would have detected the smile in Joy's tone.

"Handsome, the letter said."

"He addresses his remarks almost exclusively to me."

"Exclusively, the letter said."

"Madison avenue!" called the conductor.

A moment later Jim and Joy stood on the curb under one umbrella wait-

ing for a blockaded car. Jim stood straight and stiff, holding the umbrella high over their heads, admitting the cold, wet world to their conference.

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